

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) A picture coding apparatus, comprising:
  - a picture analyzing unit for analyzing source picture data to obtain coding difficulty information;
  - a picture conversion unit for converting a picture format of the source picture data;
  - a coding unit for encoding picture data converted by the picture conversion unit; and
  - a conversion controller for controlling the picture conversion unit based on the coding difficulty information to convert the picture format using ~~spatial conversion~~, at least temporal conversion, ~~or both~~.
2. (Original) A picture coding apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein the coding difficulty information is information about the source picture data, including at least one of: spatial frequency component information, noise component information, interframe change information, and interframe motion vector information.
3. (Original) A picture coding apparatus as described in claim 1 or 2, wherein the coding unit encodes picture data based on conversion information input thereto by the picture conversion unit, and multiplexes the conversion information to the picture data.
4. (Currently Amended) A picture coding apparatus as described in

any of claims 1 to 3 2, wherein the picture analyzing unit analyzes the source picture data using a specific threshold value.

5. (Original) A picture coding apparatus as described in claim 4, wherein the picture analyzing unit determines the threshold value based on a coding result from the coding unit.

Claims 6-20 (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) A picture coding method for coding source picture data after picture conversion, comprising ~~a step for~~:

converting a picture data format based on coding difficulty information using ~~spatial conversion~~, at least temporal conversion, ~~or both~~.

22. (Original) A picture coding method as described in claim 21, wherein the coding difficulty information is information about the source picture data, including at least one of: spatial frequency component information, noise component information, interframe change information, and interframe motion vector information.

Claims 23-27 (Canceled).

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said temporal conversion being performed using at least frame/field decimator.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said coding unit to encode the picture data based on conversion information being input by said conversion controller.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said conversion controller to convert the picture format using both said temporal conversion and spatial conversion.

31. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said converting includes converting the picture data format based on coding difficulty information using both said temporal conversion and spatial conversion.

32. (New) A method for coding a picture, comprising:

- determining coding difficulty information from input source picture data;

- converting a picture format of the source picture data;

- encoding picture data converted by the picture conversion unit; and

- controlling the converting of the picture format based on the coding difficulty information using at temporal conversion.

33. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising controlling the encoding based on conversion information determined from said converting.